

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 993

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize Frances Williams Preston on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who in their careers over the years have performed with uncommon ability and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, Frances Williams Preston is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for more than 45 years with Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI), the last 18 years as President and Chief Executive Officer; and

WHEREAS, born in Nashville to Bauman and Irene Schmitt Williams, Frances Williams graduated from the public schools of Nashville, attended Peabody College at Vanderbilt University and was an active member of First Lutheran Church; her only sibling, brother Doug Williams, was a well-known artist and interior designer; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston joined WSM in the mid-1950s as a mail room employee and eventually became the popular hostess of a daily fashion and style television show on that station; in 1958, Bob Burton, then-president of BMI, persuaded her to open the company's Nashville operation; and

WHEREAS, Frances Williams Preston, working with one assistant in her parent's home, developed the performing rights organization's profile in the Southern region and oversaw the company's growth to more than 400 employees in Nashville; in 1985, she was appointed to the national position of Senior Vice President, Performing Rights; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Mrs. Preston was elevated to President and CEO, requiring her relocation to New York City to head BMI's national and international operations; she also became a member of BMI's Board of Directors; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston's outstanding abilities, manifested from her early days establishing the BMI Nashville office and signing Southern regional songwriters, served her well

as she rose to oversee a company that represents the work of legendary international stars, including Chet Atkins, Dolly Parton, Kris Kristofferson, Isaac Hayes, Steve Cropper, Sting, Gloria Estefan, Paul Simon, Shania Twain and many of today's rising young music creators; she has led the effort to build BMI's 2004 repertoire of almost 4.5 million musical works into the world's most popular collection - with a royalty system to match; and

WHEREAS, as an articulate and vehement supporter of creators' rights, Mrs. Preston is well-known on Capitol Hill, making BMI a key participant in the wide-ranging alliance debating the public policy issues of the digital age; she remains politically vigilant concerning the rights and incomes of songwriters, composers and publishers and has strongly supported legislation to assure fair compensation to songwriters and artists in the arena of on-line digital downloading of music; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston played a key role in extending copyright protection to older compositions through the Copyright Amendments Act of 1992 and strongly supported more recent legislation to extend the copyright term to life of the composer plus 70 years; she served as a member of Vice President Al Gore's National Information Infrastructure Advisory Council in 1995 and 1996; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston has contributed her considerable abilities to a number of organizations, both within and outside of the music industry; during the administration of President Jimmy Carter, she served on the Panama Canal Study Committee and the commission for the White House Record Library; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston was the first non-performing woman invited to join the prestigious Friar's Club, and in 1993, she became the first woman appointed to the Club's Board of Directors; that same year she received the Friar's Applause Award for Lifetime Achievement; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston was named an American Broadcast Pioneer by the Broadcaster's Foundation for more than 40 years of contributions to the industry, and in November of that same year, she was inducted into the *Broadcasting & Cable* Hall of Fame; in 1988, she was the recipient of American Women in Radio and Television's Outstanding Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston received the AWRT's President's Award in September of 1998 and was featured on the cover of *Radio Ink* in February of 1994; she has been listed by that publication as one of "The 50 Most Influential Women in Radio" each of the past five years and was honored by the Broadcast Foundation with its Golden Mike Award in February 2004; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston serves on the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) President's Advisory Council and the NARAS Foundation's Board of Directors; she received a National Trustees Award - the highest award given by the Recording Academy to a non-performer - at the 1998 Grammy Awards, inscribed "To Frances Preston for 40 years of tireless efforts in support of the world's songwriters, singers and musicians." In January of 1999, she was named Person of the Year at the MIDEM convention at Cannes, France; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Academy of Popular Music/Songwriters Hall of Fame, a board member of the Rhythm and Blues Foundation, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the National Music Museum (DC) and a past member of the National Advisory Board of the George Foster Peabody Awards; she has served as President of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), Canada/USA Committee from 1998-2000 and is a member of the CISAC Executive Bureau. In 2003, she was elected Chairperson of FastTrack, the leading international technical alliance of authors' societies; and

WHEREAS, a recipient of the Irving Waugh Award of Excellence, Mrs. Preston is a lifetime member of the Country Music Association and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1992 and into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 2004; she holds honorary degrees from the Berklee School of Music in Boston, Lincoln College in Lincoln, Illinois, and Oklahoma University in Norman; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston has been frequently recognized and honored for consistently volunteering her time and talent to many worthy charities, including the T.J. Martell Humanitarian Award in 1992; she was involved in the creation of the Frances Williams Preston Research Laboratories at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, where she serves on the Board of Overseers, and Vanderbilt's Medical Research Building II was renamed in her honor in 2001. In

1999, she received a "Woman of Achievement" Award from the Society for the Advancement of Women's Health Research for her leadership in the Martell Foundation's groundbreaking work in cancer research; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston has received Humanitarian Awards from the International Achievement in Arts Award in New York in both 1995 and 1997, and, in 1996, she received the first Distinguished Service Award from New York's Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center and the Lester Sill Humanitarian Award presented at the Retinitis Pigmentosa International Awards in Beverly Hills. She was also honored in 1996 by the Entertainment and Music Industries Division of the UJA Federation with a gala "Toast to Frances" luncheon held in New York; and

WHEREAS, Frances Preston has built a lifetime record of accomplishments and honors too numerous to record in totality, including other recent honors such as the Touchstone Advocate Award from Women in Music in October of 2003, the NARAS Heroes Award from the New York Chapter of the Recording Academy in December of 2003, the Michael Bolton Charities' Lifetime Achievement Award during that organization's 11th Annual Gala and Golf Classic in September 2003 and an honor from the Florida Bar Association's Legal Symposium in Miami in April 2003; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston received the President's Award from the Nashville Songwriters Association International in April of 2002 for her "significant contributions to the betterment of all songwriters"; in June 2001, she received the President's Award from the National Music Publishers' Association in recognition of her contributions to the music and music publishing industry, and, in October 2000, she was honored by the City of Hope with its annual "Spirit of Life" Award; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Preston will be taking a much-deserved retirement this year; and

WHEREAS, throughout her long and estimable career, Frances Williams Preston has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of her colleagues in the music industry, the many charities and associations she has served and her many friends and acquaintances; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we extend to Mrs. Frances Williams Preston our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement and every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we thank her for her years of untiring service to the music industry, her community, state and nation, and to the many charitable causes that she has unstintingly supported.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.